

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 331

By Norris

A RESOLUTION to recognize Sydney Mayo Bender of Shelby County on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of industry; and

WHEREAS, one such exceptional professional who has dedicated her career to providing the highest quality education for Tennessee's students is Sydney Mayo Bender; and

WHEREAS, for the past twelve years Mrs. Bender has served with distinction as principal of Tara Oaks Elementary School in Collierville, Tennessee, and she will be taking a much deserved retirement at the end of this school year; and

WHEREAS, Sydney Bender has been an educator for more than forty years, and her love for teaching was passed down from her mother and an aunt, who each taught in Shelby County for more than thirty-five years; her sister and Collierville resident, Anne Dunn, was also a teacher in Shelby County and Memphis for more than thirty years; and

WHEREAS, Sydney Bender opened Tara Oaks eleven years ago, and before that she was principal of Arlington Elementary for three years; she was also assistant principal at Ellendale Elementary in Bartlett, where she internalized the philosophy of her principal and mentor, Jim Jonakin: "Children don't care what you know until they know how much you care."; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bender is described as the star quarterback of Team Tara Oaks with the PTA Board members acting as her cheerleaders, encouraging parental involvement in the welcoming environment the principal has created; she is active at every PTA event and has ridden a bicycle through the halls, been pulled in a little red wagon, and dressed in full football uniform to show her support for PTA membership drives; and

WHEREAS, programs that Mrs. Bender has implemented and supports include Leadership Tara Oaks, which teaches children to be positive role models; she also works with the school's guidance counselors to provide evening programs for parents on informative topics such as bullying, ADHD, and homework tips to help with raising children in a rapidly changing world; and

WHEREAS, the Tara Oaks Elementary PTA is petitioning the Town of Collierville to rename Senter Creek Drive in honor of Principal Bender; the PTA states in their filing, "We truly love and respect Mrs. Bender and believe she has improved our quality of education, community, and life!"; and

WHEREAS, her professional accomplishments aside, Sydney Bender is most grateful for the love and support of her husband, Roger; they have been blessed with a daughter, Jessica, son-in-law, Daniel, and a precious grandson, Zach; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bender is an extremely talented and compassionate administrator who has worked assiduously to motivate her students to reach their full potential, both as scholars and as citizens; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career in education she has served as an inspiration to her colleagues and students alike, and her friendship and counsel are highly valued by those who are fortunate to know her; and

WHEREAS, Sydney Bender truly epitomizes the dedicated principal who is wholly committed to the highest ideals of public service and quality education for her students, and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Sydney Mayo Bender for her generous dedication to her students and her community, and on the occasion of her retirement we offer our heartfelt wishes for every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.